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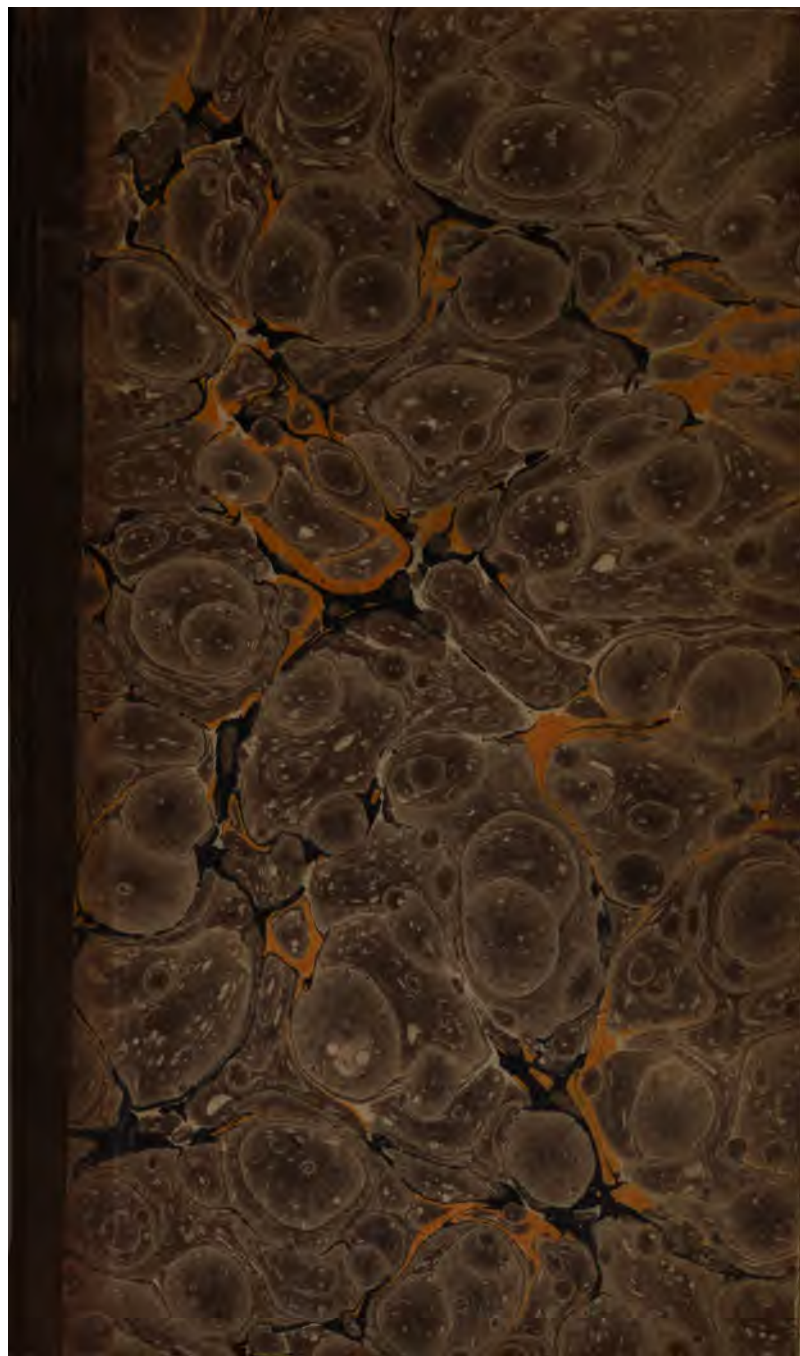
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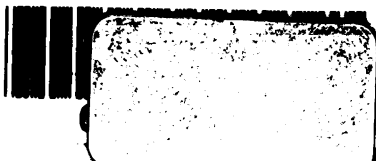
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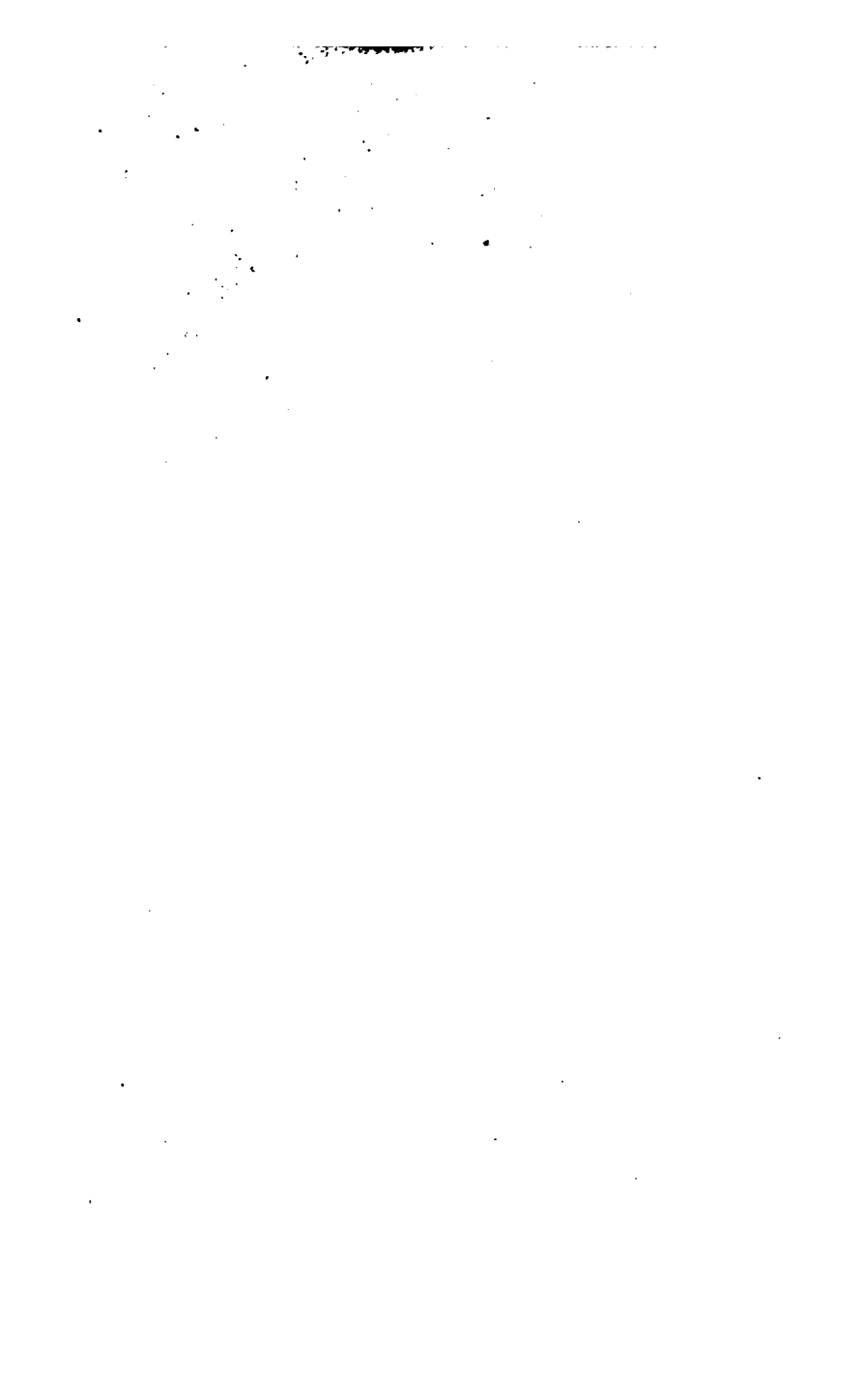
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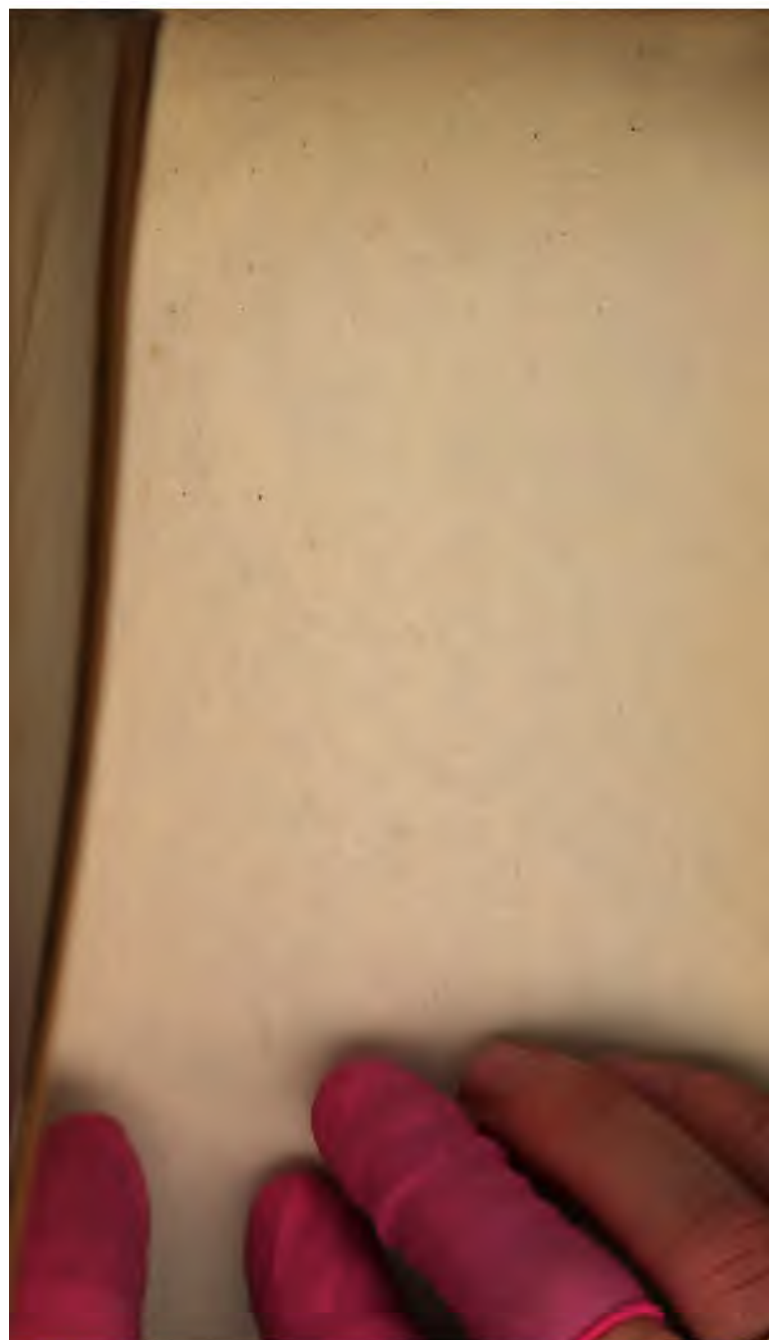
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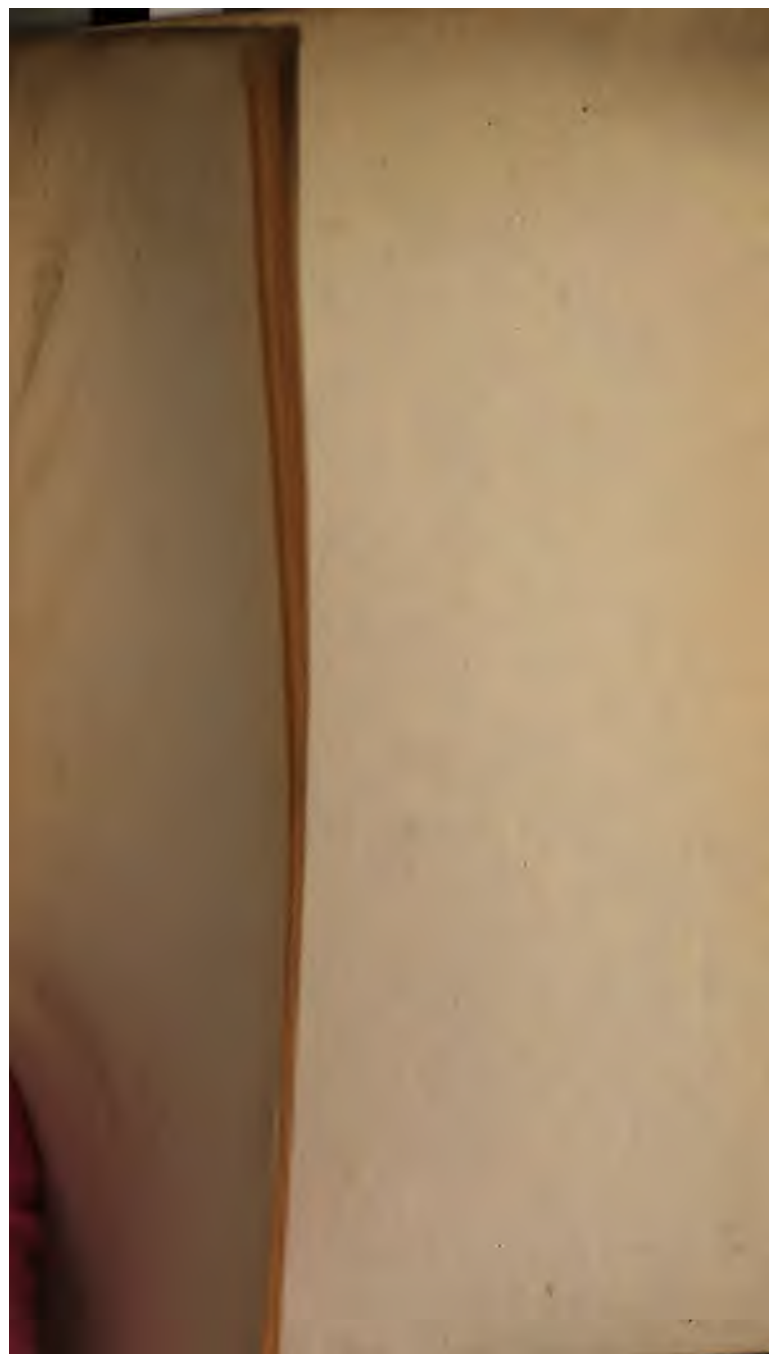
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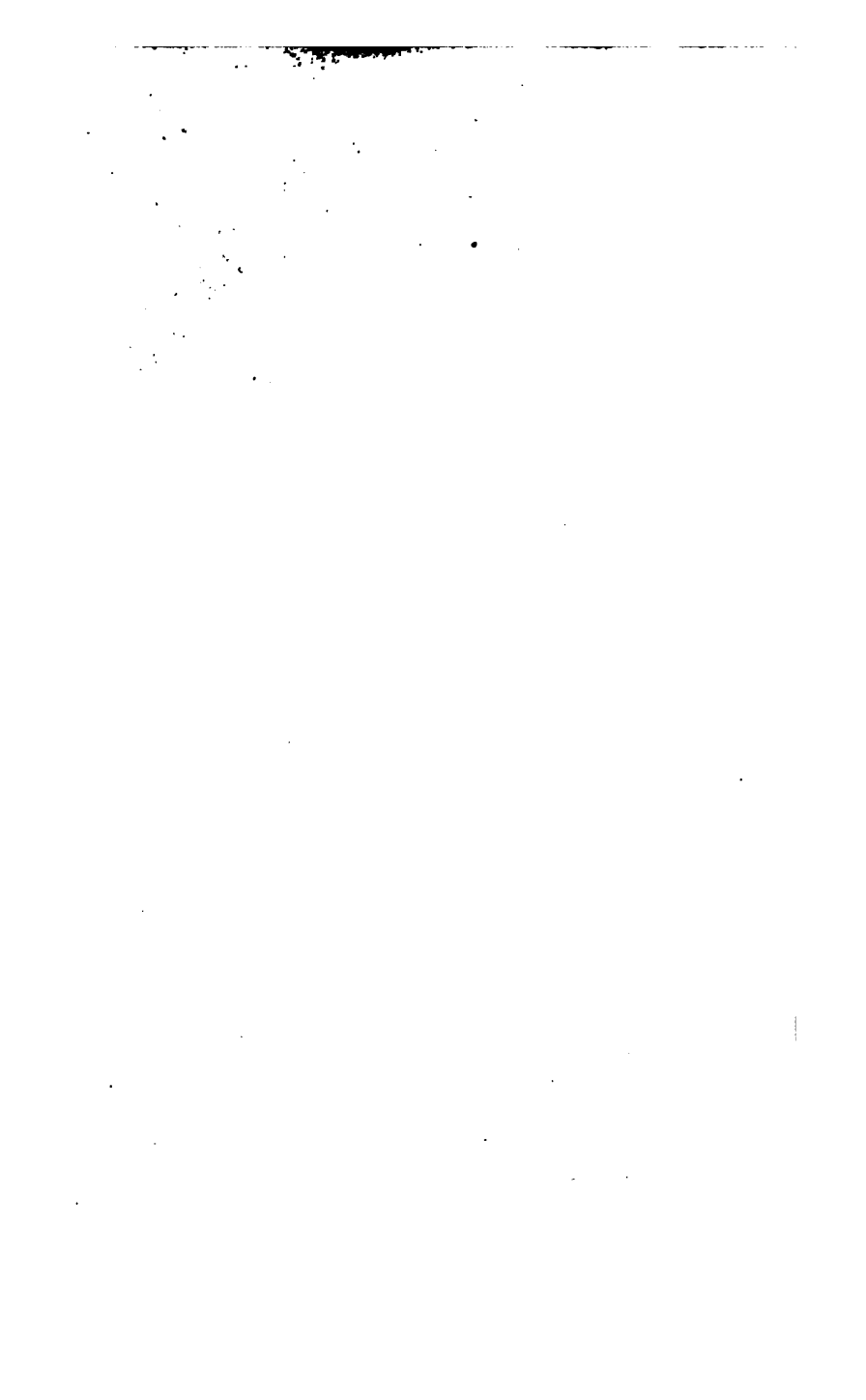


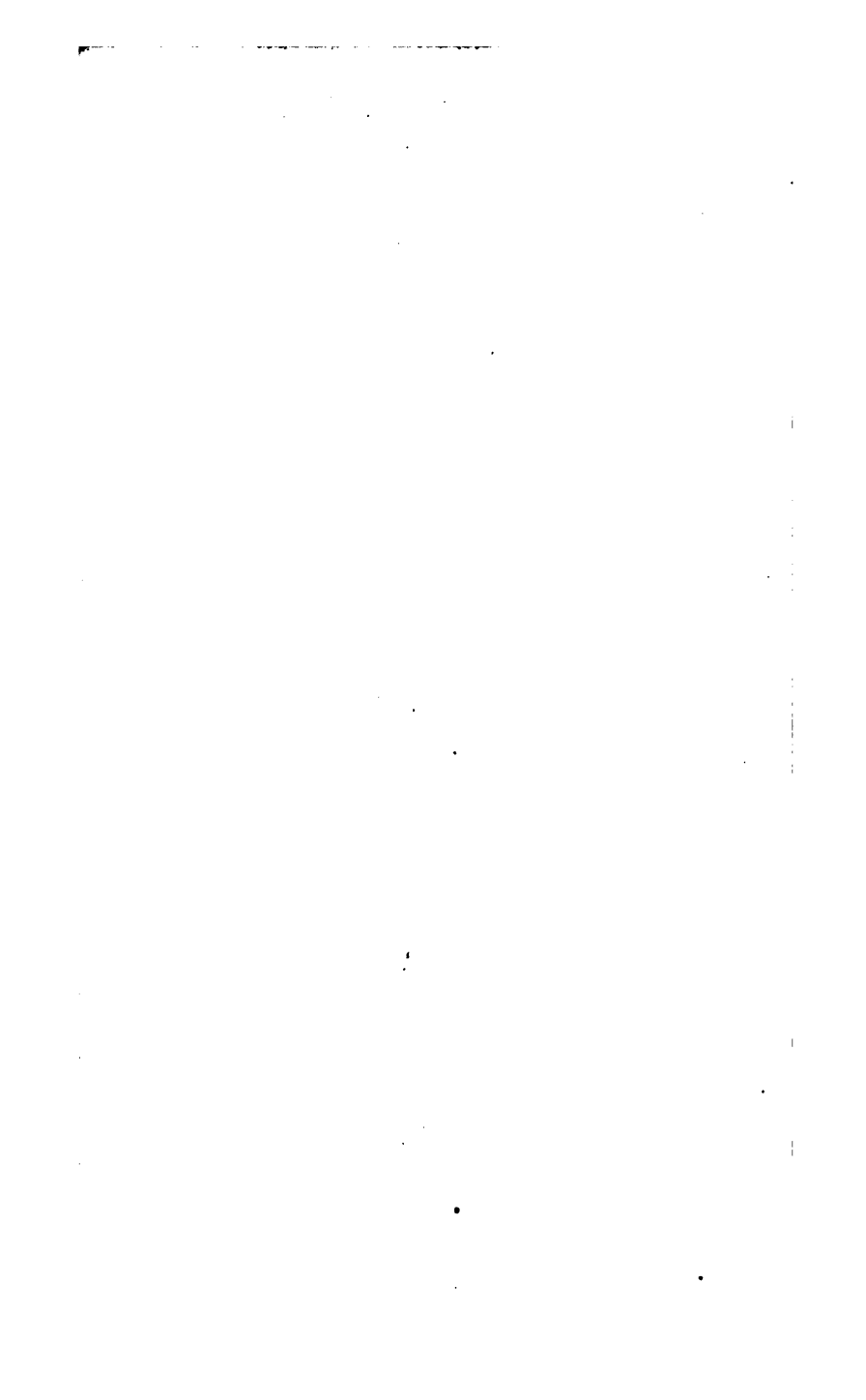


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A DIALOGUE 86  
BETWEEN  
A ROMISH PRIEST  
AND  
RICHARD KNILL,  
MISSIONARY.



"There is not one missionary to a million idolators. So they are not so thick upon the ground as you seem to imagine."—Page 5.

LONDON :  
PUBLISHED BY J. SNOW, 35, PATERNOSTER-ROW.  
—  
1841.



## A DIALOGUE,

&c.

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It was a fine summer's morning in the month of June, that I set off from Doncaster on the top of the coach. We had our full number of passengers, and I was packed very closely behind the coach, with my back to the horses, and three stout men sat facing me.

We had not travelled far before the wheel came in contact with something which lifted the coach much on one side, and a passenger shrieked with fear. However we soon were right again, and proceeded. I seized the opportunity, and tried to turn it to some profitable end; and, addressing the gentleman opposite to me, said, "How soon we might have been upset!" "Yes," said he very gravely; "we only just missed it." "And we might have been killed." "Yes; that is very likely." "This shows us, sir, how important it is to be prepared always to die; for we never know when we set out on a journey if we shall live to see the end of it." "Ah," said he, nodding significantly, "it is important indeed." "And do you think, sir, you are prepared to meet your God?" "No; I do not think I am." "Then your situation is very solemn indeed." "Do you think you clearly understand wherein a preparation for heaven consists?" "No; I have not thought much of these things; but I should like you to tell us what is a right preparation."

By this time all the other passengers on the back of the coach were listening with fixed attention. One of them, who was sitting next to my left arm, had spoken a word now and then. From his accent, I perceived he was from Scotland; and it struck me he would be able to help me in this work. So I said to him, "Suppose the gentleman opposite had said to you, '*Sir, what must I do to be saved?*' what reply would you have given him?" "I would have quoted the words of the apostle, '*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,*' Acts xvi. 31." "I thank you, friend," said I; "that is just the thing. This is God's method of mercy. In this way God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus." I enlarged on the delightful subject, and said to the traveller: "Do you think, sir, you understand it?" He replied, "I think I do." At that moment a shrewd looking man, who had been watching every word and every look, interrupted us, and said to me, "Are you a preacher of the gospel, sir?"

I replied, "A preacher of the gospel is a great and honourable character. I can hardly say whether I have any claim to the dignity; but I speak to my fellow sinners, just as I spoke to the gentleman who sits by your side."

*Priest.* Have you been preaching at Doncaster?

*Knill.* No; I have been attending a missionary meeting.

He looked at me contemptuously, and said, "I think missionary meetings are very foolish things."

*Knill.* That is possible, sir, for we are accustomed to take very different views of things. Some call light darkness, and darkness light; while others call bitter things sweet, and sweet things bitter. It arises in a great degree from our tastes, and our vision. For my own part, I think missionary meetings are good things, and I know they are. *God blesses them.* Pray, sir, have you ever been at a missionary meeting?

*Priest.* No; I have not: but I read on these subjects. I watch your movements; and I think there is a great

deal of needless fuss about it. You are perplexing the poor ignorant people in heathen lands. There are so many different sects going; one contradicting the other, that the poor people do not know what to do.

I replied, "There is not one missionary to a million idolators. So they are not so thick upon the ground as you seem to imagine."

"I speak advisedly," said he; "it was only the other day that I read an address sent to our king by some heathen people, begging him to tell them which was the true religion; for they were perplexed by the numerous missionaries who came to them: one saying, 'Believe me;' and another, 'You must believe me.'"

*Knill.* I dare not doubt your veracity, sir; but I very much doubt the truth of that paper which you read.

*Priest.* What reason have you to doubt it?

*Knill.* Because, sir, I have been a missionary, and know the wants and the woes of the heathen too well to believe such a statement.

*Priest.* Have you been a missionary?

*Knill.* Yes, sir. I went to India in that capacity nearly twenty years ago.

"Then you might as well have staid at home," said he, "if you did not give them better advice than you gave this gentleman just now. I was listening. I heard your method of preparation for heaven; and I say again, if you did not give the heathen better instruction than you gave this gentleman, you had better have remained at home."

"Well," said I, "this is very candid of you; and, as the salvation of the soul is so important, and you think I failed to give a clear view of the way of salvation, I shall be most happy to be instructed by you. Pray tell me wherein I failed."

*Priest.* Why you never said a word about baptism.

*Knill.* No; indeed I did not. I acknowledge it. I was telling a man how he might get to heaven from the top of

a coach, where there was neither water to baptize, nor time to perform it.

*Priest.* But you ought to have spoken of it ; for when the Lord Jesus Christ gave the commission to his apostles, he said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; and he that believeth not shall be condemned," Mark xvi. 15, 16.

*Knill.* You are quite right, and perhaps I am as great an advocate for baptism as you are.

*Priest.* I do not think it.

*Knill.* I am sure I am not, if you are of the same sentiments as a person I once met with in Madras.

*Priest.* What were his sentiments ?

*Knill.* I was in the constant practice of visiting the gaol, and reading and expounding the Scriptures to the prisoners ; and on one occasion, while I was so engaged, a stranger, a handsome, well-dressed man, came and gazed upon us. We were all sitting together in an open verandah, and he stood outside, and heard what I said to the prisoners. When I left the verandah, and was walking towards the gate which led to the city, he came up to me, and said, "So you come to instruct the prisoners. I used to do so for some time, but at last I gave it up ; for it was of no use." I replied, "No use, sir, to read the Scriptures to a sinner !" "I mean," said he, "if any of them had believed there was no place to baptize them ; so I gave it up." "Ah ! ah ! I understand you, sir. No wonder you gave it up." I found out what were his real sentiments. Now, sir, perhaps your views are like this man's. Pray tell me, are they ?

He gravely replied, "No, sir ; I am a Catholic priest."

*Knill.* Thank you, sir. Now I know to whom I am speaking ; and before we enter any farther on the subject, I should like to know from you, if you think "the thief on the cross" went to heaven ?

*Priest.* I do not think that to the point.

*Knill.* Then our conversation ceases. If you will please to tell me what you think respecting him, then we will go on.

"There can be no doubt but he went to heaven," said the priest.

"And it is equally certain," I replied, "that he was not baptized. There was no water near, and the hands of the Saviour were nailed to the cross: it was an extreme case, and it answers exactly to our present position. I was advising this gentleman to look unto Jesus, simply and immediately; assuring him that faith in Christ would save him, though he were suddenly removed by death by the overturning of the coach."

The priest assented, and the listeners seemed greatly to enjoy the conversation. And as it appeared quite new to them, I could not but hope that some of them would reap benefit from its power. The Lord Jesus was fully set forth as the great atoning sacrifice, through whom we have complete, and present, and eternal redemption.

The priest then turned away from baptism, and said to me, haughtily, "Have you been ordained?"

*Knill.* O yes. I was ordained seven times.

"Seven times!" he exclaimed.

*Knill.* Yes; seven times. First at Gosport, second at Leeds, third at Bideford, fourth at Barnstaple, fifth at South Molton, sixth at Wellington, and seventh at Axminster.

*Priest.* You astonish me. Were you ordained by a bishop?

*Knill.* Yes; there were forty bishops present at the ordination in Leeds, and how many at the other places I cannot tell.

*Priest.* Was it done by order of the king?

*Knill.* No. We fear God, and we honour the king. But we have no more to do with the king than we have

with the Pope in matters of religion. We take the New Testament alone for our guide in these things.

"I cannot make it out," he exclaimed.

*Knill.* I wish you could make it out; and I am sure you would, if you studied the Bible more.

At this he became very warm, and said, "You are continually referring to the Bible. I tell you, sir, we have youths of ten, twelve, and fourteen years of age, who never read the Bible, and yet are better acquainted with our religion than some of your Protestants, who have been reading the Bible for fifty years. How do you account for this?"

*Knill.* Very easily, sir. A man may read the Bible for 100 years, and never become acquainted with your religion; for it is not in the Bible at all.

There followed a tremendous laugh from the passengers, and my friend seemed hurt. I said, "I do not wish to hurt your feelings, but we must speak out, and the people must hear it."

*Priest.* Do you say that our religion is not in the Bible? then why do you borrow so much from us?

*Knill.* Borrow! Borrow, sir, borrow from you; what?

*Priest.* You borrow your mitres and crosiers for your bishops, and our surplices, &c., for your clergy; and a good part of your service book is a translation of ours.

*Knill.* I tell you, sir, we reject it altogether. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants.

*Priest.* I cannot make out what you are. What kind of a Protestant are you?

*Knill.* I am a Protestant Nonconformist. Have you not read about us?

Without answering my question, he inquired, "Have you read on the Catholic controversy?"

*Knill.* I read Bellarmine in Latin, as an exercise, when I was at college.

*Priest.* That was only one side; have you read ——?

*Knill.* I just looked into it ; and that was enough.

*Priest.* What do you mean, sir ?

*Knill.* Did you know old Mr. Newton ?

*Priest.* No ; who was he ?

*Knill.* I will tell you something about him which will illustrate what I mean. Mr. Newton was a godly clergyman of the Church of England. A learned doctor, who wrote a Socinian commentary on one of the epistles, said to Mr. Newton, "Have you read my commentary?" "I have looked into it," said the good old orthodox divine. "Looked into it!" said the displeased doctor ; "why it took me years to write it, and you have merely looked into it." Mr. Newton answered, "When I sit down to dine on a leg of mutton, if I find that the first slice I cut is tainted, I need not eat the whole leg of mutton to know if it is good or not. So if I look into your book, and find that it is all wrong at the beginning, I need not to read any more." So I say of your Catholic books, the infallibility of the Pope, the apostolic succession, the baptismal regeneration, the confessional, the absolutions, the purgatory, the holy water, the baptism of bells, and many things beside, are so childish, so delusive, so arrogant, and so ruinous, that I throw them away altogether: I call them vanity and lies, and bind the Bible to my heart.

The coach ran rapidly along, and the wheels made a considerable noise ; so that we could stop when we pleased, without appearing to wish to leave off. And, after pausing for a little, I said to him, "You appear to watch our movements, and to dislike our plans. Pray what fault can you find with our missionaries?"

*Priest.* I see that some of them are detained at home with their sick children ; and I see others of them abandoning the work because of their afflicted wives. Missionaries ought not to be married.

*Knill.* And is this their chief offence ? Are you wiser than God ? He said of man in innocence, "It is not good

for man to be alone ; let us make an help-meet for him." Is it possible that I see in you a fulfilment of a dreadful prophecy ?

*Priest.* What prophecy ?

*Knill.* The apostle Peter prophesied, that in the last days there should men arise bringing in damnable heresies, forbidding to marry. Only think, sir, what a loss the world would have sustained, if you had not come to enlighten it ; and yet you could not have been here, but for the marriage of your parents.

*Priest.* I plead, sir, for a doctrine of my church.

*Knill.* Yes, I know it ; and it shows us that your church does not draw her doctrines from the Scriptures : for the Spirit says, " Marriage is honourable in *all*." I appeal to the common sense of mankind, if your doctrine is not dreadful. I appeal to our fellow-travellers : Gentlemen, is marriage a good thing ? They all answered, " Yes." " Are you all married ?" " We all are, or we hope to be."

Just at this moment the coach stopped, and the loud talk and laughter about marriage attracted the inside passengers ; among whom was my dear and honoured friend, Dr. M'All. He popped his head out of the window, and inquired, " What are you talking about, brother ?" I said, " Doctor, we want your opinion. Here is a gentleman who says it is not good for ministers and missionaries to marry ; is he right ?"

" He knows nothing about it," said the doctor ; " send him to the Bible, and to all right-hearted men, and they will decide against him."

The coach drove on, and I said to the priest, " You see, sir, the Bible, and all right-hearted men, are against you ; and I am sure all right-hearted women are. I can speak from experience about it. I was never happy until I had a good wife ; and I have never been unhappy since. I hope I have been useful too ; and I am sure my wife has contributed her full share of the labour : and this is only what

multitudes of good husbands can testify. Pray, sir, are you married?" This question made him fidgetty, and he said pettishly, "No."

*Knill.* I hope you will be soon.

*Priest.* It is impossible, sir.

*Knill.* Impossible! for what?

*Priest.* I am under a vow of celibacy.

*Knill.* A bad vow, sir; and the sooner a bad vow is broken the better. I shall rejoice to learn soon from the newspapers, that you are married to a most devout and excellent young lady, and that she is laudably assisting you in your Sunday-school.

"Impossible, sir," he continued.

By this time we were approaching the end of our journey, and most of the controverted points had been handled; but now I think we came to the most important. He could not quite forgive me, and yet now and then we were pretty good friends; and, as the coach moved slowly up the hill, and he could be heard by me, in a soft voice,

He said, "I am aware that Protestants think we are in great error. Tell me candidly where you think our chief error lies."

I replied, "I think, by this time, you are convinced that I have no uncharitable feeling towards you, nor towards Catholics as a body. No. I would do good to the Pope himself, if it were in my power. But your errors are many and great; and I consider that the chief error of the Church of Rome is in the grand doctrine of the sinner's justification in the sight of God. The Scriptures declare, that being justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. v. 1. Now you have left this Bible doctrine, and instead of it you mix up many things which must displease God, and prove ruinous to souls. Could you but renounce all that man hath done in this, and look simply and entirely to the blood of Jesus for salvation, then

you would be saved yourself, and take the proper steps to teach the people also how they may be saved. O attend to this, and then I shall meet you in heaven.”

While we were thus speaking, the coach arrived at the office; we shook hands, jumped off to look after our luggage, and we saw each other no more. Perhaps we shall not meet again, until we meet at the judgment-seat of Christ. What a meeting it will be !







